intrusion of any other tongue. Even Hebrew was banned from daily intercourse and only used for religious services and literature, and other important matters such as documents and trade agreements. The study of a foreign language, or even acquaintance with script other than Hebrew, was prohibited. The Jews only learned the language of the country when it was absolutely required for their profession. Till the end of the eighteenth century Yiddish was the language of all the European Jews apart from the small communities of Sephardim in France, England, Holland, and Italy. Only in exceptional cases had the Ashkenazic Jews in Holland, Southern and Central Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary adopted the vernacular.

(3) THE DECLINE OF YIDDISH

The first blow was struck at the supremacy of Yiddish when, at the end of the eighteenth century, Polish territories passed under Prussian dominion. The higher standards of civilization and compulsory education, carried on in German, made the Jews rapidly adopt the use of pure German in place of Yiddish. In Western and Central Germany this linguistic change occurred during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, in Eastern Germany (Posnania) several decades later, and Yiddish

entirely dis-
appeared from daily intercourse. Only a few Hebrew words
remained in use, and even the number of these has steadily
decreased.

Similar changes supervened in Prance, Holland, England,
Italy, and the Magyar parts of Hungary, where in the
nineteenth century, or in some cases even earlier, the Jews
gave up Yiddish or Spaniole in favour of the language of
the country. But within the great belt of East European
Jewry Yiddish maintained itself. At the Russian census of
1897, 96-9 per cent of the Jews (98 per cent within the Pale